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ABSTRACT

Reporting on a study of Cree Indian students from Manitoba, this paper focuses on Native education as a minority experience within the majority culture and on the culture of the school as it is experienced by minority students. A theoretical discussion presents issues involved with schooling for minorities: discontinuities, socialization for competence, and the idea of caste. Student assessment, retention, and graduation data over the past 20 years indicate change in the Native students' success in the Manitoba education system is markedly below that of the general population. The "deficit syndrome" and "discontinuity/mismatch explanation" are examined. The "cultural diversity paradigm" is presented as a more contemporary explanation that has the greatest potential for impact upon educational practice for minority students. Initiatives undertaken by Manitoba's Frontier School Division to soften the system's negative regard for the cultural capital of Native students are outlined: cultural awareness workshops and inservice training to prepare non-Native teachers for work with Native classrooms and identification of program needs and development of curricula by Native educators. (NEC)

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SCHOOL SUCCESS OR SCHOOL FAILURE:

AN INDIAN EXAMPLE

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> What these [minority] groups have in common is that they are a minority "culture" being educated; often whether they like it or not, within the confines of a majority culture that has different values, orientations, and goals from the minority group.
>
> Minority students begin as unequal participants in a majority society and end up as unequal participants. (Stiegelbauer, 1984).

The primary goal of education in any social group is to prepare their young for their roles as adults, thereby ensuring the transmission of cultural attributes and norms. As social groups have come into interaction, or become more complex, the educational system has become one arena for the expression of cultural differences. Put another way, schooling is an important part of an ongoing dialogue as to which cultural attributes will be passed on to whom and to what end. For minority groups or cultures with distinctive differences from those of the culture group dictating educational norms, getting an education can be a confusing experience. The "adult roles" they are being prepared for are not those that fit, necessarily, within their own culture. Even worse, schooling may not prepare them for any role at all, in either culture.

This paper focuses on Native education as a minority experience within the majority culture, and in particular on the culture of the school as it is

experienced by minority students. Of all minority groups within the American educational system, Native Americans (or Canadians) represent a unique problem. Considered with Black, Hispanic, and Asian students, Native Americans have the smallest percentage of any group of students in college; they have one of the highest dropout rates of any group, and the lowest employment potential from their learning in school. The rate of unemployment of Native Americans is 3 times the American national average (La Fromboise & Plake, 1983; Stiegelbauer, 1984). While some of the historical background for the schooling of Native America may differ from that of other minorities, many of the general problems and situations common to schooling for Indian students can also be described for other minorities. Given this, what is occurring in the context of education for minorities that makes effective schooling a problem? Is it the minority or is it the school?

This paper reports on a study conducted in the Canadian province of Manitoba with Cree Indian students. As a result, much of the discussion is in terms of native education in Canada. The similarities to the American situation, however, are only too clear. The major problems identified for Crees, and the underlying bases for these problems are equally applicable for either country. In an effort to aid understanding of what some of these underlying factors might be, the paper begins with a presentation of some of the theoretical issues involved with schooling for minorities and ends with the application of those concepts to Native American students in light of some of the data presented in the Canadian example.

The Context of the School for Minority Students

Education, according to Linquist (1970, xv) "is the process through which social groups organize learners into institutions that provide the means for

learning in a formal and ordered manner." The way in which this is done varies significantly, given the size and complexity of the societal group. In the small society, training occurs as a by-product of cultural routine; the family is mainly responsible; training is conducted practically in actual situations or by initiation societies, age grades, or rituals recognized to contain specific educational functions. Learning is usually achieved by watching or imitation. Proficiency is measured by performance. The relationship of what is learned to the cultural group is more intimate and immediately applicable (Gearing, 1970).

In large societies there is seldom the homogeneity found in small groups. Education becomes more formalized, transmitting the general cultural stance of the general principals upon which the culture of a pluralistic state is based. Training is done by specialists, not family, and is more abstracted from the context of use. Proficiency is measured by examination rather than by performance. The school becomes the site of a new kind of cultural content, including the codes by which the people of one societal group relate to another.

The education of any minority student involves an interaction between the minority culture, including its values and norms, and the school, which for most of the United States or Canada, represents the culture of the majority population of those countries, the middle class. Explanation of many of the problems for minority students has been related to differences inherent in that interaction. One way of discussing those differences is in terms of discontinuities, or the lack of match between interacting parts of each cultural system. Discontinuities may exist in language use, in structuring time, in values, in the meaning of traditions, in the lifestyle of the home versus that of the school, in social interaction and communication style.

Almost all of the ethnographic work done in Indian schools stresses the discontinuities present in the school context (Deyhle, 1984; Stiegelbauer, 1984; Wolcott, 1967). The end effect of discontinuity for both student and teacher in many Indian schools, and likely for other minorities, is often miscommunication, misunderstanding, lowered attention, comprehension and low achievement, frustration, dropping out, loss of self-esteem, and inadequate preparation for adult roles in the minority or majority society.

Another way to look at the results of education for Indians and other minorities, and problems related to those results, is in terms of socialization for competence and the idea of caste. Evidence of discontinuity within the school setting may be discerned through observation of events occurring in the school. The idea of caste and competence involves not only the micro-setting in the school, but the macro-setting, the broader attitudes and values of both cultural groups as they are expressed in that setting. In particular, it reflects the relationship of the majority society to the minority society, or to minorities in general.

Educational sociologists "have maintained that the structuring of knowledge and symbols in educational institutions is intimately related to the principals and practice of social and cultural control in our society" (Apple, 1978, 495). The ideas of caste and competence involve not only what happens at the school level but the longer range effects of education in terms of jobs, living conditions, and the ability to participate effectively in American society.

John Ogbu (1978) in his studies of Blacks in schools has suggested that minority students "fail" to become equal participants within the American social system, at least in part because they are not being educated, nor socialized within the structure of the education system, to be equal

participants. They "fail" not because there is something inherently wrong with them, but because they are responding to the underlying structure of the system. In the end, "lower school performance and lower educational attainment are functionally adaptive to minorities ascribed inferior social and occupational positions in adult life" (Ogbu, 1978, 2). Ogbu refers to these minority groups as having a "caste-like" status in American society. The term "caste" implies a limitation in social and financial mobility that change little with generations. This limitation is maintained by the structure of each system, the American social system and the caste group's own view of their prospects.

One way to see the action of "caste" in the education of minority groups is to look at the competencies acquired by those students in the course of their schooling. The idea of competence as Ogbu uses it, refers to those adult skills, roles, or positions achievable by students as a result of their schooling. It is Ogbu's theory that minority students, despite innate abilities, are taught different skills or competencies than the Anglo students in the classroom. Ogbu cites the fact that the level of education achieved by Blacks is higher for the nature of the jobs they take on than it is for Whites (1975). The end goal of the educational system, though perhaps unconscious, is in Ogbu's perspective to maintain the stratification of society as it stands. If minority students do not have the skills to be economically self-supporting or to achieve higher status jobs, the relationship of minority to majority is maintained, i.e., perpetuating a "caste-like" position.

The role of economics and status as it is reflected in educational structures is the basis of a construct called <u>cultural capital</u> (Apple, 1978; Stiegelbauer, 1984). Cultural capital itself indicates those cultural attributes, like language forms, abilities, and tastes, that have been labeled

as desirable by the dominant culture. As with economic capital, those who possess cultural capital get more return for their investment -- the structure of the system reinforces itself by acknowledging and supporting like elements. This affects the school in that children with the desirable "capital" are treated differently than those without it. Information that is transmitted in the school is filtered by the cultural capital necessary to obtain it.

As the average American school system reflects the norms and values of the middle class, identification with these norms and values becomes the capital necessary to do well within the system. Some research suggests that students without these middle-class attributes do not receive the same attention and approval from the teacher as those who do have these attributes (Rist, 1977), with the result that they also do not receive the education or information necessary to acquire those attributes. The system becomes self-perpetuating. For the Native American student, differences in their culture and language from the American norm, as well as the economics of their living situation, would place them far outside the cultural capital given preference in the average classroom. Ideas of cultural capital indicate that the preferences expressed and the differential treatment resulting from these preferences are ingrained in the social and educational system and are not a part of conscious intent by teachers.

The concepts of discontinuity, caste, competence, and cultural capital allow insight into the nature of the interactions occurring in a school setting. Research on school interactions has suggested that there may be ways to restructure what happens in the school for better outcomes for minority groups. Research on the minority groups themselves has suggested aspects of their cultures that might be used to make learning easier. It is Ogbu's theory, however, that important as these kinds of research are, they deal

primarily with resolving the symptoms rather than the causes of school problems for minorities. "They often fail to explore how the broader features of American society may have created conditions in the homes, the school, and the child which are the cause of school failure" (1978, 214).

Many educators, especially those involved with education for minorities, have called for a paradigm shift, a re-examination of some of the principles underlying educational policy affecting minorities. Bilingual classrooms, once considered poor educational practice, have gained new support in recent years. The question of school goals also becomes an important one for minorities -- can schooling serve two societies, minority and majority, and if so, how? More minority teachers could make a difference to students of their own culture group, but few have had the "cultural capital" to become certified, which a public system demands. At present, it appears that change in the results of schooling for minority students is occurring at much the same pace as change in the minority culture itself as it comes increasingly in contact with the larger society.

Education and Native Peoples

As mentioned earlier, Native peoples represent a unique problem in education, though they also share many similarities of pattern and response common in research on other groups. Historically, native peoples differ from other minorities in several ways. The foremost of these is that they arrived neither voluntarily in search of a better world nor were they forced here. Throughout the course of colonial history and the Indian wars, they had the status of separate nations. Early treaties included provision for the education of Indian young as a part of negotiations. As the status of Indians changed from that of a separate nation to that of a "conquered" people, the

kind of education provided for Indians by the U.S. or Canada varied according to the conception of the role Indians should play in the larger society. Their earlier status as separates peoples, their cultural differences, and their own will to maintain their culture resulted in the reservation system and a policy of assimilation via education. Indian students were taken from their homes to boarding schools and the like, in hopes of eliminating the Indian problem. This goal of assimilation, however, has yet to be accomplished. In a sense, they have chosen to remain separate. Despite this, time has imposed on them a mixture of cultural traits or options rather than a real separation. Educational offerings, for the most part, still assume assimilation.

Despite gradual changes in the approaches to education made by both Tribal governments and Federal officials, schooling for Native Americans continues to be plagued with problems. Tribes that have been able to have better success with education are those, like the Navajo, the Pueblos, and some others, who have been less traumatized by the Indian wars of the late 1800's, and who have a better history of community development and cooperation. These tribes have also been able to maintain a dual orientation to education -- to the needs of the tribe and to basic skills.

Overall, however, Native Americans generally receive an inferior education compared to that available to others. They are faced with a high dropout rate and low job ceiling, i.e., the types or levels of jobs available to them. They have problems in language and cultural orientation that contribute to discontinuity within the school system. They have the attributes of a "caste-like" group. The are characterized by low school achievement and performance on tests as well as by group bonding behaviors that often further enhance discontinuity and miscommunication within the

school system by inhibiting attention to achievement, although these behaviors also provide continuity and security for the student group (for specific references, see Stiegelbauer, 1984).

The next section illustrates many of the principles presented in the theoretical discussion. The section presents some case examples from Manitoba, Canada, where both retention and achievement for Native students are far below the national norm. The data used for discussion are retention rates and achievement scores for the whole province versus those for the Frontier School Division which has a high population of Cree Indian students. Once the data is presented, the section explores some of the reasons for the results as well as some approaches the Frontier Division and other schools might take to improve the situation. Discussion of the study data points at how some of the underlying assumptions of the system can influence the educational process for Native students.

Studies of Native Students in Canada

In 1971, a study was commissioned by the Four Nations Confederacy of Manitoba, Canada. This study, called Wabung, which means "our tomorrows" in Saulteaux, was to report on the status of Native education. The statistics were startling. From 1949 to 1971 the retention rate for Native students in Manitoba was roughly one-tenth of the rate for the Provincial population as a whole (Table 1). Less than 7.2% of Native students entering grade 1 in 1960 completed grade 12 in 1971, as compared to a provincial norm completion percentage of 68.1%.

Another study was commissioned in 1984 by the Frontier School Division of Manitoba to assess the accessibility of high school education to native students within the Division. The data (Tables 2 and 3) collected as part of the study indicated that the retention rate of students through the system had

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Table 1

Enrollment by Grade in Relation to the Initial Grade 1 Enrollment (1%)

YEAR OF GR. 1 ENROLL.	Gr. 2 Enroll. 1 yr. later	Gr. 3 Enroll. 2 yrs. later	Gr. 4 Enroll. 3 yrs. later	Gr. 5 Enroll. 4 yrs. later	Gr. 6 Enroll. 5 yrs. later	Gr. 7 Enroll. 6 yrs. later	Gr. 8 Enroll. 7 yrs. later	Gr. 9 Enroll. 8 yrs. later	Gr. 10 Enroll. 9 yrs. later	Gr. 11 Enroll. 10 yrs. later	Gr. 12 Enroll. 11 yrs. later	Gr. 12 Non Enroll. (7 below)	YEAR OF GR. 12 ENROLL.
1949-50	43.2	36.3	32.5	26.7	17.4	11.8	7.1	5.3	3.8	2.2			1960-61
1950-51	47.5	43.6	38.6	29.2	20.4	12.4	7.9	5.1	3.7		1.6		1961-62
1951-52	43.5	42.8	34.4	32.2	22.0	12.6	9.1	5.8		3.1	1.9	33.9	1962-63
1952-53	52.1	47.8	41.9	33.3	22.8	16.8	11.2		6.2	4.1	1.3	35.4	1963-64
1953-54	52.3	45.6	38.6	31.4	23.0	16.5		9.4	6.6	3.3	2.2	44.0	1964-65
1954-55	53.2	49.6	38.3	35.1	28.9		17.6	13.3	9.0	6.3	3.7	53.0	1965-66
1955-56	50.3	45.3	38.7	34.4		25.3	16.9	12.0	8.5	6.1	2.7	53.0	1966-67
1956-57	68.0	62.8	58.8		44.5	38.4	25.7	18.4	14.4	8.2	4.2	54.8	1967-68
1957-58	74.1	76.7		64.8	52.4	43.2	32.2	24.8	14.2	10.7	5.4	60.5	1968-69
1959-60		91.5	83.1	71.5	62.2	55.1	41.8	31.5	22.0	11.6	6.0	64.3	1969-70
1960-61													
1961-62 (8)	103.4	104.3	94.8	90.1	81.8	74.2	51.5	36.7	25.6	13.5	7.2	68.1	1970-71
1962-63	108.9	110.7	100.4	105.5	97.1	81.4	55.2	39.3	27.4	14.4	7.8	71.9	1971-72
1963-64	99.5	105.0	101.8	97.5	85.9		58.9	41.9	29.2	15.4	8.4	75.7	1972-73
1964-65	99.7	93.6	88.3	76.7			62.6	44.5	31.0	16.4	9.0	79.5	1973-74
1965-66	87.9	82.7	76.8				64.3	47.1	32.8	17.4	9.6	83.3	1974-75
1966-67	83.2	70.0					68.0	49.7	34.6	18.4	10.2	87.1	1975-76
1967-68	79.1						71.7	52.3	36.4	19.4	10.8	90.9	1976-77

(6) With Grade 1 enrollment as the base qual to 100%

(7) "Enrollment in Schools and University 1961-62 to 1975-76" Staff Study No. 28 -- Economic Council of Canada. The retention rate for Manitoba would be slightly higher if inter-provincial migration is considered. The different is about -0.2% for 1960-61 and -4% for 1967-68. (From Staff Study No. 25 Economic Council of Canada) This column represents Grade 12 enrollment in Manitoba related to Gr. 1, 11 years earlier.

(8) A retention rate over 100% indicates an increase in enrollment from one grade to the next higher one a year later. This may be due to students enrolled in the schools at grades higher than the grade 1 level. It was assumed, when Grade 1 was set at 100% that all enrollment would be initiated at Grade 1. This trend in retention rates may be indicative of youth migration from a region where they entered the education system where their enrollment statistics were not included in the Indian Affairs Branch Annual Reports or they were not part of the formal education system period, to a region where they entered the education system initially at grades higher than Grade 1.

The migration came to a peak in 1962-63 and then started to diminish.

Source: Indian Tribes of Manitoba, 1971, p. 105

Table 2

Provincial Retention Rates

Grade 2		Grade 12		
Year	Enrollment (N)	Year	Enrollment (N)	% of Grade 2 Enrollment
1968	19,987	1978	14,009	74%
1969	18,884	1979	13,888	74%
1970	18,473	1980	13,914	75%
1971	18,317	1981	14,175	77%
1972	17,408	1982	14,984	86%

Source: Government of Manitoba Planning and Research Branch, 1983, p. 5

Table 3

Frontier School Division Retention Rates

Grade 2		Grade 9			Grade 12		
Year	Enrollment (N)	Year	Enrollment (N)	% of Grade 2 Enrollment	Year	Enrollment (N)	% of Grade 2 Enrollment
1968	621	1975	310	50%	1978	91	15%
1969	559	1976	303	54%	1979	75	13%
1970	579	1977	336	58%	1980	96	17%
1971	587	1978	303	52%	1981	129	22%
1972	611	1979	292	48%	1982	136	22%

*Retention rates are calculated by taking, for example, the Grade 12 enrollment as a percentage of the Grade 2 enrollment 10 years earlier, (e.g., $\frac{91}{621} \times 100 = 15\%$).

Source: Government of Manitoba Planning and Research Branch, 1983, p. 4

improved by comparison to the statistics quoted in Wabung. The rate of successful completion for high school in 1982 by students who entered grade 2 in 1972 was 22%, compared to a provincial completion rate of 86% for the same time span. Although the rate of retention for students within the Frontier School Division is more than double the actual and expected completion rates for Native students within the province, it is still one quarter of that for the general population.

Student standardized achievement data collected for the years of 1977, 1978, 1979, 1980, 1981, and 1982 showed a consistent below-national norm achievement for students within the Division (Frontier, 1983). In fact, over the 6-year span in which the standardized testing was compulsory within the Division, student achievement scores remained between the first and tenth percentile nationally (Frontier, 1983). In 1982 the standardized achievement testing program was disbanded and replaced with a Provincial Assessment Program in which students were tested upon a specific curriculum content in use within the province. Assessments took place in mathematics, reading, writing, and social studies. Student scores on the provincial assessments fell 15 to 30 percentage points below the provincial norm in all areas tested (Frontier, 1983).

Student assessment, retention, and graduation data indicate change in Native student movement or success in the system to be markedly below the success and movement rates of the general population as a whole. Test data may be limited as a comparative evaluation tool because of "culturally determined styles of displaying competence" (Deyhle, 1984). Records of school completion, however, are more indicative of the native student's inability to see advantages to the schooling process.

Why These Results?

The fact that student achievement and retention data has changed little over the past 20 years is obvious. Educational research into the reasons why minority students achieve less well than majority culture students has revealed two interpretations of the data. These two interpretations are the Deficit Syndrome and the Discontinuity/Mismatch Explanation. A third more contemporary explanation which reinterprets the data from a cultural relativism point of view has the greatest potential for impact upon educational practice for minority students. All three explanations and the research data associated with each add a dimension to the understanding of the status of Native education.

The Deficit Syndrome

The Deficit Syndrome is characterized by the belief that students are backward or retarded in development and are lacking in basic requisites for continuance in the system. The programs developed as part of the deficit syndrome tend to be specific skills programs designed to "catch up" students and bring them to norm. The high incidence of special needs students in systems of Native education can be attributed at least in part to the identification of students in a deficit situation measured against a majority cultural benchmark (Frontier, 1984).

The major difficulty in applying deficit thinking to multicultural education is that what are presumed to be deficits constitute a judgmental bias which is discriminatory on cultural grounds and, indeed, creates an artificial disadvantage for the students. An excellent case in point is the research conducted on learning styles (Fuchs & Havighurst, 1973) in which it was noted that Native children develop visual acuity as the primary tool of

learning. Information processed orally is less well assimilated. The majority of school programs for Native children are patterned on what is successful with Anglo children, that is, a heavy dependence upon oral language information processing. Native students entering this system of instruction fail or do poorly and are assessed as incapable in even the most fundamental skills needed for education, such as the ability to process information orally. These students are labelled "deficit" and placed into a program to correct the identified deficiency.

The majority culture system identifies weaknesses in the minority child based on its own education precepts, then proceeds to remediate the student by teaching to the student's "weaknesses." When programming is based upon deficit thinking, the student starts out behind and remains behind since only his "weaknesses" are addressed.

Discontinuity/Mismatch Explanation

The Discontinuity/Mismatch explanation recognizes that there are some areas in which minority students may bring a different set of experiences than expected to the school system and that these experiences, although not invalid, are in conflict with the school experience. Although discontinuity/mismatch theory admits the existence of a valued alternative experience, the instructional emphasis often remains on compensating for the student's earlier experience. This compensation may take the form of special studies courses, such as Native studies, women studies, minority studies, etc. The emphasis of the system is upon the creation of instructional strategies which are designed to create linkages between the mismatch of experience. The underlying assumption that the school experience as designed by the majority system is the experience of greater cultural value (or capital) and must take precedence over the minority cultural experience.

Evidence from Research Studies

The research findings associated with the cultural discontinuity/mismatch studies are particularly interesting as is the methodology employed during such research, since it is sensitive to identifying cultural influences. Microethnological views of the participants involved in the process of minority education has revealed a clash of cultural precepts. Often the activities and behaviors of the minority culture child are misinterpreted or unrecognized within the majority culture system of education, resulting in the application of misappropriate instructional strategies, assessments, and remediations. In their review of microethnological research, Guthrie and Hall (1983) cite a study by Mohatt and Erickson in which two classrooms in an Odawa Indian School were observed over an extended period of time. One classroom was taught by a Native teacher and the other by an Anglo teacher. Mohatt and Erickson concluded that "the differences that were observed did not reside in the teachers' good intent or technical ability as professionals, but in the relative "cultural congruence" of their teaching styles with the children's experience of social life outside the school (Guthrie & Hall, 1983, 65).

The difference between the two teachers were clear:

> The Indian teacher's approach was slower and more deliberate and individuals were not singled out before the whole group. The non-Indian teacher, however, took more active control over the class, often conducting management and control from across the room. Mohatt and Erickson report evidence that shows the first teacher's manner to be more compatible with the cultural style of the Odawa (Mohatt & Erickson, 1981). They also point out that the second teacher, by the end of the year, had begun to modify his procedures to be more in keeping with the style of his students (Guthrie & Hall, 1983, 65).

Studies by McDermott (1978), Gumprez and Hrasimchuck (1972), and Rist (1973) as reported by Guthrie and Hall (1983) also point out the incongruence

of strategies valued by the majority culture education system and the experiences of the minority culture student.

Given the statistics shown in the Wabung study, the results of cultural discontinuity/mismatch studies and the cultural diversity evidenced in Native education, several questions relating to the future of Native education and minority education in general become apparent:

1. Can meaningful educational experience for Native (minority culture) students be provided by a system of education designed and executed for and by a majority culture?
2. Can Native (minority culture) students achieve the educational goals of the majority culture within an accommodating majority culture education system?
3. How is accommodation within the majority culture education system to take place and what form is it to take?

The role of culture in education and the impact of cultural diversity must be discussed if these questions are to be addressed. Although recognizing education as a cultural experience will not provide immediate answers, it will open avenues for action previously closed to public education and permit a possible reshaping of educational experience for minority students within the education system.

The consideration of the role of culture in education and the impact of cultural diversity upon educational practice can be termed the Cultural Diversity Paradigm of Education.

Cultural Diversity Paradigm

The research data on the discontinuity and mismatch of "in school" and "out of school" experiences for minority children highlights the point of view that education is a cultural manifestation and experience bound by a set of cultural precepts which identify the ways and means by which minority children

are disadvantaged in a system of education designed for and by a majority culture.

The Culture Diversity Paradigm of education recognizes and capitalizes upon the variety of cultural experience brought to the learning place, assumes that cognitive styles, learning and teaching styles, and modes might vary from student to student or cultural group to cultural group, and further recognizes that program must be tuned to these variations by providing experience, content, instructional strategy, modes of communication, and systems of organization which are matched to the student.

The Manitoba data available since 1951 on student movement and achievement indicates that it is not possible for Native students to achieve the goals of the majority culture within the existing system. It must be remembered, however, that programming and the provision of instructional opportunity has been based primarily upon a "deficit syndrome" interpretation of the educational needs of Native students. This ethnocentric interpretation has resulted in the provision of educational opportunity designed primarily to reduce the influence of the minority culture in the educational process.

Applying A Cultural Diversity Paradigm

Although it is not anticipated that change to the majority culture educational system will occur quickly or at all in relation to minority education, instructional alternatives at the school, classroom, and personal levels are possible.

Changes in instructional practice designed to tune teaching activity to learning activity should note the characteristics students bring to the learning place and predominant communication and interaction styles of the students, as a minimum criteria for determining a teaching approach. This has

implications for individual educators in that it emphasizes an educational experience that is a continuation of the students' cultural experience and that is addressed to the strengths of the learner rather than to his perceived deficiencies.

One particular strength Native children in Manitoba bring to the learning place is a bilingual capability. Traditionally this has been regarded as a disadvantage. Recent research associated with bilingualism and cognitive development (Raphael, 1983) indicates that bilingual students have conceptual options available for processing data, whereas monolingual students are bound by the framework of one language. The degree of bilingualism and its effect upon cognitive abilities is still under study; however, research would suggest that if Native children bring two languages to the school, it is to the students' and subsequently the school's advantage to develop proficiency in both languages and utilize both languages as an instructional means. This is rarely the case, even in systems where Native speaking teachers are numerous. Historically instruction in English has been related to the cultural assimilation of minority groups. Bilingual education presumes some valuing of both cultures.

Typical interaction styles of the Anglo and Native teachers can be highlighted by the following example: the Native teachers teach like Mr. Rogers, while the white teachers prefer the frenetic style of Sesame Street circa the mid 70's. The Native student responds to the style of the Native teacher with attentiveness and discipline. The Anglo style seems to generate classroom management problems. More analysis and description of what constitutes "Mr. Roger's style" on teaching is required, but in the meantime closer communication between Native and non-Native teachers as well as

scheduled team teaching could contribute to more effective interaction strategies within the classroom.

The area of paralingual communication is also one which can be utilized to greater advantage in the classroom. Observation of Native teachers and adults has revealed use of a rich paralingual messaging system. The non-Native teacher relies heavily upon the oral mode of communication, and as a result operates a classroom which is "noisy" and hectic. The Native teacher uses a visual as well as an oral channel for communication and is very aware of the visual messages being communicated within the classroom. By utilizing two modes of communication to which the student is atuned, the Native teacher runs greater odds in sustaining contact with the student and increasing learning time. Further, non-Native teachers are often unaware of the "second" language at play in the classroom and are at a distinct disadvantage in the area of interpersonal communication with the Native student. Again, closer communication and cooperation between the Native and non-Native teacher would aid the non-Native teacher in developing a set of communication skills which is necessary if student-teacher contact is to be maximized.

The capacity of Native students to utilize bilingual messaging systems is indicative of the characteristic Native students bring to the learning place which remain largely ignored or unrecognized by the educational system. Rather than screening minority children for learning difficulties, local institutions and individual staffs may more profitably spend energy in identifying simple ways the school can capitalize upon the learning style and communication preferences of the student upon entry into the school.

Some Beginning Initiatives to Improve Cultural Understanding in Manitoba Schools

One provincial school division has implemented several institutional initiatives designed to soften the system's negative regard for the cultural capital of the Native client. These initiatives, undertaken by the Frontier School Division, constitute an initial reaction to the need for greater culturally diverse input into the educational process. The first initiative focuses upon the preparation of non-Native teachers for work in the Native classroom and takes the form of cultural awareness workshops conducted at the local school level by a group of Native educators and elders. This recently implemented program of teacher inservice training is designed to develop in the non-Native teacher as awareness of and sensitivity to the cultural experience of the Native community. It is hoped that continued exposure to the community culture will provide the stimulus for enhanced multicultural understanding amongst non-Native teachers.

The second initiative is more systemic in nature in that it involves Native educators in the process of identifying program needs and developing curricula within the system. The Frontier Division has promoted the formation of a Native language committee and a Native studies committee for the purpose of evolving programs of Native language and natives studies within the context of the existing school curricula. Although these efforts remain at the "fringe" of mainstream educational practice within the division, they nevertheless represent a new systemic awareness of the cultural nature of education.

The Frontier Division has recognized the need to note and value the cultural experience of its client population and is making attempts to meeting the educational needs of students within the mainstream educational context as

well as a community cultural context. Whether the institutional initiatives undertaken by the division will result in a positive change in student achievement and retention is unknown. Whether the Native community can wait for another generation of youth to filter through the system before success or failure can be judged is also unknown.

Summary and Conclusion

The role of culture in human social and psychological development has gained new credence over the last few years. Until recently, "the dominant intellectual traditions have seen the core of child development as a natural unfolding of universal states of intellectual and emotional growth, as in the work of Piaget and Freud" (Wallace, 1985, 36). Yet new understandings of cultural dynamics suggest that the role of culture in development should be given equal weight to other theories and beliefs, if not take central stage altogether. "Culture, in this sense, refers to a system of ideas about the nature of the world and how people should behave in it that is shared, and shared uniquely, by members of a community. The system is learned by children and forms a template, as it were, for the underlying conceptions of self, society, and human nature that guide all behavior in that community. Because these ideas are encoded in public symbols such as literary texts, art, the dance, drama and religious ritual, they are accessible to anthropological observation and inquiry. Culture theorists argue, in effect, that culture creates minds, selves, and emotions in a society as reliably as DNA creates the various tissues of a living body" (Wallace, 1985, 36).

Whether or not this cultural perspective is agreed upon, evidence appears to be mounting to indicate that the influence of culture is strong in any cultural, or cross-cultural, interaction (Apple, 1978; Deyhle, 1984; Fuchs &

Havighurst, 1973; Guthrie & Hall, 1983; Kleinfeld, 1979; Ogbu, 1978; Stiegelbauer, 1984; Wallace, 1985). In an educational setting it is expressed in what is taught, the way in which it is taught, the structure of the building, the reactions of the students, and the reactions of teachers and administrators to students. The sheer weight of facts related to the problematic educational experience of Native students in both the United States and Canada points to some deeper element at play. Minority children in general, and Native children specifically, do no achieve as well in school as do children of the mainstream society. Traditionally, this lack of success and achievement has been interpreted as resulting from a cultural deprivation (in terms of the majority culture system) or deficiency in the Native learner and has resulted in an educational emphasis on developing skills in those areas in which the Native learner was thought to be deprived. Programs generated under this educational directive have produced no widespread change in the achievement or success rating of Native students, though they may have had effect in some individual situations.

More recent emphasis on multicultural education (Raphael, 1983) has caused a reinterpretation of some of the achievement data for Native students with an eye to the effect of cultural diversity and the cultural nature of the educational process. The result of this reinterpretation has been a reevaluation of the value of the experience, skills, and abilities Native students bring to the learning place and a consideration for harmonizing the learning environment with the student's expertise so as to capitalize upon the strenghts of the learner rather than to emphasize his or her weakness from the point of view of the mainstream system.

The difficulty faced by a reinterpretation of the abilities and capabilities of the Native student in a way that is not superficial or token

is that it requires a paradigm shift on the part of the educational establishment, and even more difficult (if that is possible), it requires change in educational practice. It is very difficult to begin thinking of students in a positive, enhancing light when the very raison d'etre of the system has been to provide compensatory experience, to assume a need to make Native students the same as Anglo students.

One way to begin to increase the school's potential for Indian students is to redirect the nature and structure of the information presented to students. Schools with large Indian populations need to consider both the needs of Indians within their own culture and their needs as participants in the larger fabric of society. Some Indian schools are doing this, though they often seem to be those under tribal or reservation control rather than those that are a part of a public school system. In order to determine needs for Indian students, assessment must consider learning more in terms of skills than values, or value laden abstract content (Wolcott, 1967). Wolcott's assessment of the real needs of the Indian students in the Kwakiutl Indian village in which he was a teacher were as follows:

1) students need the ability to communicate in English, to understand the three R's and basic information common across the continent, such as geography, etc.;

2) they need familiarity with standard written English;

3) they need to be able to satisfy the educational prerequisites for higher grades and college;

4) they need to understand public transportation and communication systems;

5) they need knowledge of health and leisure activities;

6) they need to know about the work requirements for their area of residence -- how to fill out an application and prepare themselves for a job;

7) they need skills related to accident prevention;

8) they need information about Indian rights (1967, 127).

Wolcott further suggests that teachers should make classroom goals more specific and discrete with operational defintions such that rewards would become more immediate and less abstract. He also suggests fewer hours and more flexibility in school structure to better match village life. For him "formal educational programs that are not accompanied by real economic and social opportunities are headstarts to nowhere" (Wolcott, 1967, 126).

What Wolcott is describing in altering the content and approach to teaching in Native schools is a means to provide for a "socialization," a preparation for adult roles, that is closer to that existing in the home and village. Other researchers have suggested the integration of multicultural curriculum in areas of strong Indian populations, which the initiatives of the Frontier School Division are one attempt at. They suggest further that more research be done that includes Indian participants in developing a curriculum better adapted to Indian needs. Still others suggest that indigenous Indian styles of learning and cultural values be used as guidelines to the structuring of Indian schools (La Fromboise & Plake, 1983; Stiegelbauer, 1984; Wolcott, 1967).

The data from the Frontier School Division and discussion of that data reinforce many of the concepts presented in the beginning of this paper. If Native students do not have the skills, or the competence, to succeed within the system; if the result of schooling is low achievement or low school retention because of students' problems with the educational system as a whole; if students are not able to acquire the "cultural capital" to succeed, is it the failure of the student or is the system failing to understand and meet the needs of a unique population? As one Indian educator stated, "The emphasis should be placed on respecting the child as a learner -- as an Indian

learner. If schools and teachers did that, we wouldn't have so many 'push outs'" (Stiegelbauer, 1984, 94).

The issues described as a part of education for Native Americans -- language, cultural differences, economics, differential schooling or poor schools, the pressures of culture change -- reflect many of those that concern other minority groups. As education is one of, if not the most important agent in the socialization of an individual for his or her life as an adult in society, effective use of education for any individual must be based on realistic needs and goals. Schools cannot change economics, but as Wolcott suggests, they can change the nature of the skills taught students. Equal education may not mean that every student should be taught the same thing, nor does it mean the opposite. Bias operates with equal effectiveness whether differences are ignored or called attention to (Stiegelbauer, 1984). Some assessment of skills needed by individuals within a culture group or the group appears to be a real requirement. Another activity of primary significance is that of becoming aware of the learning styles and communication styles of the student. In a situation where Native teachers are employed, the non-Native staff should be inducted into the practice of Native education. Where staffs are entirely non-Native, an academic awareness of the cultural nature of the process of education may be all that is possible. All of these offer a start to planning an educational program that has potential to offer real rewards.

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